

Mo‘olelo Hawai‘i  
Section 2  
16 June 2016

### The Importance of Our Hawaiian History (Essay Reflection #1)

In society today, many Hawaiians have no idea the importance of knowing our Hawaiian History. In knowing and understanding our **history**, we are able to gain a better understanding of who we are as Hawaiians and what our kūleana (responsibility) is. It is important for our kupuna’s stories to be passed down and shared to the future generations in order to ensure that our culture continues to thrive. From our history we learn how all life came about in this world and knowing our Hawaiian history is important because through understanding the knowledge given to us about the past, we will be able to identify who we are and learn from others past mistakes. Throughout all the stories and videos our class has gone through, I feel that everything we covered connected to each other and is there to remind us where we fall in our genealogical history.

When learning about our **History**, the best place to start would be with the Kumulipo chant. There is over **22,000** lines seperated into 16 wā (times periods) in this genealogical chant explaining how everything started. According to Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa’s 1999 work, *Kumulipo*, “Hawaiian ancestors taught that we were born from the Pō [night], from the Akua [Gods], and from the devine ‘Āina of Hawai‘i” (pg. **3**). The Kumulipo is taught as a way of guidance and if we don’t know anything about where we come from and how our culture and traditions began, then we can not truly say that we are Hawaiians. I believe that the message from this one phrase holds a lot of mana (spiritual power) in what our ancestors kūleana (responsibility) was and how it is

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**Comment [3]:** history

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**Comment [4]:** over 2,200 lines long

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**Comment [5]:** excellent example and citation©

now our turn to take over that kūleana. It is important for us to know our history in order to ensure that the history of our ancestors continue to carry on.

Continuing to look deeper into the Kumulipo, we discover that many Hawaiians have grown away from the knowledge of our ancestors due to us being cut off from our own history long ago. According the Kumu Kame‘eleihiwa (1999), “Political events have cut us off from the knowledge of those ancestors” (pg. 2). Back in the 1800’s, American military invaded our land and took away our culture and language. Speaking Hawaiian was banned in all schools and government offices. Our own people were unable to learn about who they were and hear the stories of our ancestors that give us insight into our own identities. With everything being taken away from us, all hope seemed lost. The truth in this one phrase filled me with empathy and stength. Our people struggled, but they never gave up. They continued on and till this day we are still thriving through the years and keeping our own culture alive. We must rediscover and remaster the wisdom of our ancestors in order to truly understand our native identity.

Futhermore the Kumulipo guides us down the path of alwaus being pono (good). As stated in Kumu Kame‘eleihiwa 1999 work, *Kumulipo*, “As the younger siblings of the Hawaiian islands, we are inextricably part of this land, and born with a reposibility to mālama, or to love and care for the land, for the earth, for the Akua, and ‘Aumakua” (pg. 16). From Kumu’s one phrase, it is clearly shown that we are now responsible for taking care of our older sibling, the ‘āina (land). If we do not protect our sacred land, then who will? Through this reading Kumu’s message remains strong, mālama (take care) of our older siblings, continue practicing tradition, and learn the history of our ancestors. As the

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future generations of Hawaiians, it is our responsibility to pass down all of our knowledge to the younger keiki (children) of Hawai'i.

Throughout the years our people have overcome many obstacles. As we continue in life we learn more about our native identity and how important it is that we continue practicing our culture. The 'āina is our home and our older sibling, so we must protect the mana that is held within our land and history. In order to continue our responsibility, we must continue to speak our native tounge, practice tradition, and learn about the history of our ancestors. Through these steps, Hawaiians all over the world will be able to rise and stand tall with honor and pride for they are able to express that they are true Hawaiians.

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100% A+